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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-13 /075 W
----------030412Z 044008 /20
R 022204Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2520
INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 08800

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, BH, GT, PN, MX
SUBJECT: ALLEGED TORRIJOS INVESTMENTS IN BELIZE
AND RELATED EVENTS

1. WHILE THE GUATEMALAN AND PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENTS CONTINUE TO TRADE ACCUSATIONS THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL WIRE SERVICES, A SMALLER BATTLE IS GOING ON IN THE MEXICAN DAILY "EXCELSIOR" BETWEEN THE GUATEMALAN AND PANAMANIAN AMBASSADORS TO MEXICO ON ALLEGED INVESTMENTS IN BELIZE BY GENERAL TORRIJOS.

2. ON MAY 24 EXCELSIOR REPORTED CLAIMS BY GUATEMALAN AMBASSADOR DOROTEO MONTERROSO THAT GEN. TORRIJOS HAS PROPERTY IN BELIZE TOTALLING MORE THAN $10 MILLION (US), AND THEREFORE TORRIJOS IS DEFENDING BELIZE INDEPENDENCE ONLY TO PROTECT HIS INVESTMENTS. THE AMBASSADOR CLAIMED THAT THE MONEY WAS INVESTED IN HOTELS AND CONDOMINIUMS.

3. THE PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR EMILIA AROSEMENA VALLARINO VIGOROUSLY DENIED THE "CALUMNIOUS" CHARGES THE FOLLOWING DAY, STATING THAT GEN. TORRIJOS OWNS NO PROPERTY WHATCONFIDENTIAL

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SOEVER, THAT EVEN THE MODEST HOUSE HE LIVES IN IS PAID FOR BY THE PANAMANIAN SOCIAL SECURITY. SHE DEMANDED THAT MONTERROSO BACK UP HIS CLAIMS WITH PROOF. ON MAY 26, AROSEMENA ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT GEN. TORRIJOS WAS WILLING TO HAVE "AN INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL" INVESTIGATE AMBASSADOR MONTERROSO'S CHARGES, AND IF THE TRIBUNAL PROVES THAT TORRIJOS HAS SUCH INVESTMENTS, HE WILL

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DONATE THE MONEY TO THE BELIZE RED CROSS (A RATHER
ILLOGICAL OFFER).

4. FINALLY ON MAY 27 EXCELSIOR REPORTED MONTERROSO'S
"PROOFS":
A. THAT PANAMANIAN BUSINESSMAN AUGUSTO GARCIA FREQUENTLY
TRAVELS TO BELIZE ON THE PANAMANIAN PRESIDENTIAL JET AND
IS MET BY BELIZE PM PRICE;

B. A COMPANY CALLED BELAMA (BELIZE-PANAMA) HAS A CONTRACT
WITH THE BELIZE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FOR THE CONSTRUC-
TION OF 2,000 HOUSES. THE OPPOSITION PRESS IN BELIZE
CLAIMS THAT BELAMA HAS NO NATIONAL PRIVATE CAPITAL;

C. THAT BELAMA HAS BROUGHT INTO BELIZE HEAVY MACHINERY
UNDER PRIVILEGED CONDITIONS.

D. THAT THE PANAMANIAN CONSULATE IS INSTALLING RADIO
EQUIPMENT WITH PERMISSION OF THE BELIZE GOVERNMENT "IN
ORDER TO MAINTAIN DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH THE PANAMANIAN
GOVERNMENT."

5. COMMENT: THE GUATEMALAN AMBASSADOR MUST BELIEVE THAT
HE HAS A WEAK CASE BECAUSE AFTER HE REVEALED THE PROOFS
OF PARA. 4, HE "WARNED" THAT IT WAS HIS LAST DECLARATION
ON THE CASE OF TORRIJOS' INTERESTS IN BELIZE. NO OTHER
MEXICAN PAPER HAS PICKED UP THE EXCHANGE . SINCE
WE DOUBT THE PANAMANIAN PRESS WILL REPORT THE ALLEGATIONS,
WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THIS ASPECT OF THE PANAMA-
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GUATEMALA SPLIT AND POUCH THE RELATED CLIPPINGS TO EMBASSY
PANAMA.

6. FYI. GUATEMALAN EMBASSY HERE CONFIRMS REPORTS THAT
THE GOG HAS TURNED DOWN OFFERS BY MEXICO, VENEZUELA,
COSTA RICA, AND COLOMBIA TO MEDIATE THE CRISIS, AS
"PREMATURE". THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Event:
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